

# THE MILITANT

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booklet on Cuban Five

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 76/NO. 8 FEBRUARY 27, 2012

## US stats mask joblessness as bosses deepen exploitation

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

According to figures released by the Department of Labor, unemployment declined slightly in January. But like many government statistics, they contradict the reality confronting tens of millions of working people. Long-term unemployment is at record levels and young people are less likely to be employed than any time since World War II.

Meanwhile, President Barack Obama in his newly released budget calls for tax breaks and subsidies to factory bosses with the promise this will create “American” jobs. In this nationalist framework, the representatives of the exploiting class in the Democratic and Republican parties hope to garner support from workers and their unions in the drive against working people at home and abroad.

In face of the worldwide economic crisis—rooted in a slowdown of production, employment and trade—the bosses only “solution” is to deepen the exploitation of working people.

“The economy is growing stron-  
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## Red River Valley to Ohio: solidarity caravan links fights against lockouts



Workers fighting lockouts by American Crystal sugar and Cooper Tire are organizing “Journey for Justice” across six Midwest states. Left, food drive for tire workers fills union hall in Findlay, Ohio, Feb. 11. Right, sugar workers celebrate after expanded picket in Drayton, N.D., Feb. 13.

### Steelworkers reinforce battle with Cooper Tire

BY LAURA ANDERSON

FINDLAY, Ohio—Locked-out Steelworkers from Cooper Tire here are organizing to link up with workers locked out by American Crystal Sugar Co. in the Upper Midwest for a  
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### Sugar workers kick off 6-state ‘Journey for Justice’

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

EAST GRAND FORKS, Minn.—Workers locked out by American Crystal Sugar in the Upper Midwest are gearing up for a large “Rally for Dignity and Justice” on Feb. 22 in Moorhead, Minn. The event will kick off a solidarity caravan—“From Fargo to Findlay: A Journey for Justice”—that will unite their fight with that of workers locked out for nearly three months by Cooper Tire and Rubber Co. in Findlay, Ohio.

The rally will take place at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel at noon, and then proceed to American Crystal’s corporate headquarters in the city where the union will hand over tens of

thousands of petitions gathered across the country demanding the company end the lockout.

Some 1,300 members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union have been locked out since Aug. 1 after refusing American Crystal’s concession contract demands aimed at weakening the union.

Locked-out workers from the Cooper Tire plant in Findlay, members of United Steelworkers Local 207L, will take part in the sugar workers’ Feb. 22 rally.

“The rally will kick off a 1,000 mile journey for justice,” said Gayln  
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## Socialist Workers Party builds March 10 public meeting in NY

BY JOHN STUDER

As the world crisis of capitalist production and trade bears down more and more sharply on workers and farmers, the bosses and their government continue their relentless assault. Workers are conducting hard-fought battles against

lockouts and other attacks, from American Crystal in the Red River Valley to Cooper Tire in Ohio, reaching out and winning needed solidarity and support.

In every such fight, resistance to the bosses’ assaults runs up against the fact  
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New York City

Saturday, March 10

**After Labor Resistance and Solidarity:  
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**Jack Barnes**

Socialist Workers Party national secretary

**Mary-Alice Waters**Editor, *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*

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## Class roots of US rulers’ unremitting economic war on revolutionary Cuba

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Fifty years ago this month, President John F. Kennedy imposed a complete trade embargo against revolutionary Cuba aimed at maximizing hardship for the island’s workers and farmers, who brought an end to U.S. imperialist domination of their country, wrested political power from the capitalist exploiters and opened the socialist revolution in the Americas. The anniversary has garnered some attention in the big business press, which always fails to explain the real reasons behind the perpetual embargo and source of the U.S. rulers’ unremitting hostility.

The total embargo announced by Kennedy on Feb. 3, 1962, and put into effect four days later was a continuation of an escalating series of economic sanctions implemented under his predecessor, Dwight Eisenhower. With every successive U.S. administration, this economic warfare has remained a key aspect of

Washington’s failed efforts to restore capitalist social relations in Cuba.

On Jan. 1, 1959, U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista fled Cuba, defeated by a revolutionary war and victorious insurrection. Over the coming months,  
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# Greek workers and students protest government austerity

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece—In one of the largest demonstrations here in three years, close to 100,000 trade union-ists, students and others marched Feb. 12 to protest parliament’s impending vote in favor of new austerity measures. Another 20,000 marched in Thessaloniki, according to the BBC.

The measures, approved by parliament that day in a 199-74 vote, include a 22 percent reduction of the minimum wage, with an additional 10 percent cut for those under 25 years old; pay freezes until the unemployment rate drops from the current 19 percent to under 10 percent; a 3 percent cut in employers’ contributions to the national health insurance; and slashing the public sector workforce by 15,000 this year and 150,000 by 2015.

Parliament also approved a change to labor laws. Collective labor agreements had previously applied to all workplaces in a particular sector, even those without a union. Under the revised law, once those contracts expire, employers are free to attempt to negotiate wages worker by worker, including in union shops.

The new austerity measures were approved under pressure from the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission—the so-called troika. In exchange they pledged \$170 billion to a fund for future “bailout” loans. The deal includes a separate agreement with private lenders to write off 70 percent of the debt owed by the Greek government.

The protests were called by the country’s main union federations. A dense cloud of tear gas hung over much of the center of the city as a heavy police presence and clashes with the black clad anarchist youth kept the demonstrations away from parliament.

About 20,000 workers protested in Athens Feb. 7, and then again on Feb. 11 as part of strikes called by the union federations. Although most workers reported to work, many workplaces in industry, public transport, ferries, and some schools and hospitals were shut down by the strikes.

“The measures are unjust,” Michalis Perantinos, a worker at Athens international airport, told the *Militant*. “You can’t on the one hand throw me into sordid poverty and on the other continue asking me to pay for your debts.”

“Greece today is an example of what can happen throughout Europe,” said Moisis Litsis, who has been on strike at *Eleftheotypia* newspaper since Jan. 1. “Solidarity of European workers with not only our struggle at the newspaper but with working people in Greece is crucial.”

The new measures, the deepening capitalist crisis, and potential growth in protests have caused fissures in the ruling class parties. A total of 41 deputies from the coalition partners of the Socialist Party PASOK and the conservative New Democracy were expelled from their parties for voting against the latest measures.

The right-wing LAOS Party, which



Militant/Georges Mehrabian

Feb. 12 march in Athens protests latest austerity measures. Banner carried by students says “Out with the troika, cut all links with the EU, cancel the debt with people’s power.”

had been part of the coalition, voted against the measures. Its party leader, Georgios Karatzaferis, said, “Greece can survive outside the EU but cannot survive under a German boot.” LAOS

expelled two of its deputies for voting for the measures.

*Bobbis Misailides and Natasha Terlexis contributed to this article.*

## Paris steps up anti-immigrant drive amid high unemployment

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS—The French government reported a record 32,912 immigrants in 2011, a 17 percent jump from the previous year, according to French Interior Minister Claude Guéant.

With official unemployment here at 9.9 percent, government of President Nicolas Sarkozy has stepped up attacks on immigrants. Tunisian and Libyan refugees, gypsies, and immigrants from Romania and the Comoros Islands have all been targets for police roundups over the last year.

According to the national statistics agency, there were some 3.7 million immigrants living in France in 2008, about 5.7 percent of the population. Over the last year the government reduced the number of residency permits it approves. Reuters reports that it also cut work visas by 26 percent.

The government is also making it more difficult for immigrants to gain French citizenship, the news agency notes, and will require applicants “to sign a new charter pledging to uphold the country’s values.”

In January Guéant claimed that

an increase in burglaries was caused by “criminals coming from abroad.” He specifically accused Romanians, gypsies and Comorians as being responsible and proposed a new law that would automatically expel from France all immigrants convicted of certain categories of crimes.

“Not all civilizations have the same worth,” Guéant told the right-wing student organization Uni Feb. 4, calling the National Assembly’s July 2010 vote to ban the Islamic veil “an act of civilization.”



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*‘Gives more of a story than regular media’*

*“The ‘Militant’ helps build solidarity because it gives you more of a story than the regular media on the ongoing labor struggles everywhere.”*

*—Brian Mott, Caterpillar worker in London, Ontario, permanently laid off when company closed plant*



Militant/John Steele  
Brian Mott, laid-off Caterpillar worker.

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**Telephone:** (212) 244-4899  
**Fax:** (212) 244-4947  
**E-mail:** [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com)  
**Website:** [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)

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# Subscription renewal drive off to strong start

BY LOUIS MARTIN

Feb. 14—A five-week campaign to increase the long-term readership of the *Militant* is off to a good start. At the end of the first four days, 174 readers have renewed or signed up for long-term subscriptions, already 35 percent of the international goal.

On March 10 the Socialist Workers Party is sponsoring a national public meeting. (See article and ad on front page.) The meeting provides an opportunity for *Militant* readers to join others fighting against the bosses' lockouts and other assaults.

The *Militant* has extended its renewal drive one week through March 18. This allows distributors to come out of the March 10 meeting with a final effort to exceed the 500 goal and be poised for an ambitious spring subscription drive.

"I appreciate not only the *Militant's* coverage of local issues, but national and international events as well," said Brandon Woodward, from Longview, Wash., who is finishing his apprenticeship with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union. He renewed his subscription for six months.

Longview was the site of a six-month-long victorious battle by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union against EGT Development's attempt to shut out the ILWU from its terminal.

Woodward also got a copy of *Teamster Rebellion* and asked the socialist workers to come back so he can get a copy of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes. Both books are among five on special with a subscription. (See ad below.)

Members of the Socialist Workers Party in Seattle sold five renewals and one introductory subscription during this trip to Longview. This included one renewal and a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. The book by Jack Barnes is among those on special sale.

"We have picked up 14 renewals so far," said Frank Forrestal from Minneapolis. "This past weekend we got three renewals and one introductory subscription in the Red River Valley," where 1,300 sugar beet workers have been fighting for months against a union-busting lockout by American Crystal Sugar.

One of the renewals was sold to Scott Cook, a plumber from Hillsboro, N.D. "I love the paper," he said. "Not just because of the way it writes about the lock-out, but also the other labor struggles around the country and the world." A Mexican farm worker in Hillsboro also renewed his subscription and introduced the socialist workers to his cousin, who got an introductory subscription.

"We went to the Steelworkers food drive in Findlay, Ohio," writes Laura Anderson, an SWP member in Chicago, to express solidarity with locked-out Cooper Tire workers there and discuss the importance of the *Militant* for those in struggle today. "We sold 14 subscriptions," she added, "including four renewals among locked-out workers and three new long-term subs to United Steelworkers members from all over Ohio who brought food and donations."

On Jan. 28-29, members of the Communist League in New Zealand visited two meat workers locked out by CMP Rangitikei last year who had subscribed to the paper, said Felicity Coggan from Auckland. Workers returned to work

## Alabama rally demands repeal of anti-immigrant law



Militant/Fredy Huinil

MONTGOMERY, Ala.—More than 300 rallied in the courtyard of the Alabama Statehouse here Feb. 14 calling for repeal of the anti-immigrant law HB 56. Buses came from cities throughout Alabama, carrying construction workers, poultry workers, agricultural workers and others.

Baldo-Miro Perez, 20, a Guatemalan construction worker living in Dothan, told the *Militant* he came with a friend "to get more information and explain to my neighbors not to be scared, not to leave the state."

Speakers at the rally included Sharon Richards, president of the Metro Montgomery NAACP; various religious leaders; undocumented youth; and others.

The law requires police to check citizenship status during traffic stops, and government officials to verify legal residence for everyday transactions like obtaining a car license tag, enrolling a child in school, getting a job, or renewing a business license.

—JANICE LYNN

having pushed back some of the company's demands.

"I like the *Militant*," said Pene Wiari, "because it is pro-workers rights. It keeps the real issues in the limelight and helps people be informed and unafraid."

"The two other CMP workers we met also renewed," said Coggan.

Two members of the Communist League went from Montreal to London, Ontario, last weekend where they talked with workers fighting to get full severance pay after the closure of Caterpillar's Electro-Motive Diesel plant there. In the course of the visit, they sold seven subscriptions, including five to Electro-Motive workers.

"When I was in the picket line trailer talking to a worker," said John Steele, "another came by and asked, 'Are you signing up people to that paper? I want

to sign up too.'"

"During the weekend," continued Steele, "discussions ranged from the victory won by the longshoremen, to workers struggles in Egypt, to the developing economic crisis, to why capitalism offers no future for working people."

Keep sending reports, quotes and experiences on the renewal effort in your area by Tuesday, 8:00 a.m., EST. And if you would like to let us know what you think of the paper as a new or recently renewed subscriber, drop a note to themilitant@mac.com.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### FLORIDA

**Miami**  
**Labor Fights the Bosses' Offensive: From the ILWU Battle Against Union Busting to Other Labor Struggles Around the World.** Speaker: Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 25. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 for dinner, \$5 for program. 719 NE 79th St. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

### ILLINOIS

**Chicago**  
**The Fight Against Police Brutality Today: Justice for Darrin Hanna!** Panel discussion with Gloria Carr and Ralph Peterson, mother and cousin of Darrin Hanna and leaders of fight against police brutality in North Chicago; John Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 18, 7 p.m. Donation \$5. 806 W. Washington Blvd., 2nd floor. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.

### NEW YORK

**Manhattan**  
**Prosecute the Cops Who Killed Ramarley Graham.** Fri., Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m. 307 W. 36th St., 10th floor (use north elevators). Tel.: (212) 629-6649.

### TEXAS

**Houston**  
**Malcolm X: Revolutionary Leader of the Working Class.** Speaker: Mike Fitzsimmons, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C50-L. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.

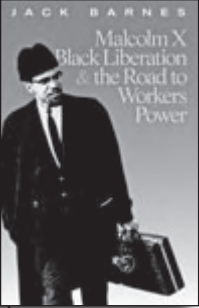
### WASHINGTON

**Seattle**  
**The Legacy of Malcolm X: The Road to Workers Power.** Fri., Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 5418 Rainier Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**Malcolm X: Revolutionary Working Class Leader and the Capitalist Economic Crisis Today.** Speaker: Omari Musa, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m. 143 Kennedy St., Suite 15. Tel.: (202) 536-5080.

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by Mary-Alice Waters ~~\$7~~ \$5 with subscription

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by Jack Barnes ~~\$3~~ \$2 with subscription

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Militant subscription rates on page 2



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Washington, D.C.	15	4	27%
Philadelphia	20	5	25%
Houston	18	4	22%
Des Moines	30	5	17%
Lincoln	6	1	17%
Atlanta	35	2	6%
Total US	389	129	33%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	20	6	30%
Manchester	10	2	20%
UK Total	30	8	27%
CANADA	23	14	61%
NEW ZEALAND	20	15	75%
AUSTRALIA	15	8	53%
Total	477	174	35%
Goal	500		



# Seattle port truckers fight fines and unsafe conditions

BY CLAY DENNISON  
AND EDWIN FRUIT

SEATTLE—Some 500 port truckers and supporters rallied Feb. 13 at the port here to back truckers' demands on shipping companies at the Port of Seattle.

Puget Sound Sage, a coalition of labor, religious and community organizations sponsored the rally.

Hundreds of drivers who haul containers off the docks in Seattle walked off the job the first week of February over unsafe working conditions and fines.

Drivers are responsible for paying fines for overweight loads, unsafe equipment, taxes, insurance and everything it takes to keep a truck running. Classified as so-called independent contractors, the truckers face legal obstacles to joining trade unions.

"I've been suspended four times for refusing to take an overweight container," Sharif Muhammad told the *Militant*. "And if I take an overweight container then I am fined by the cops who are always stopping us."

Two drivers came to the rally from the Los Angeles area. One of them, José Rodríguez, is an owner operator like those in Seattle. "We face the same kind of abuse and unfairness as truckers up here," he told the *Militant*. "The employers always hold immigration over our heads." He explained that while the majority of drivers in Seattle are from East Africa or South Asia, in Los Angeles they are mostly Mexican.

After the rally participants marched to one of the major shipping companies to present a list of demands.

Two days earlier 300 port truck drivers and their supporters participated in a town hall meeting in the area headquarters of the Teamsters union here.

"Two weeks ago nobody knew us. Today, because we raised our voices everybody knows us," Aynalem Moba,

a leader of the newly formed Seattle Port Truckers Association, told the meeting. "The fight just started. We are going for a knockout."

"Safety issues affect all truck drivers," said Calvin Borders, another leader of the truckers. "Containers and chassis are unsafe and drivers are responsible for maintaining them safely, but we do not own the container or the chassis."

The event was hosted by Joe McDermott, a King County Council member, and Port of Seattle Commissioner Rob Holland. It opened with comments by them and three other local elected officials. Moba, Borders and three other leaders of the port drivers organization discussed safety, harassment from the cops, and retaliation by the bosses against strike organizers.

Speaker after speaker took the microphone during the discussion period that followed.

Michael, a trucker, talked about a



Militant/Edwin Fruit

**Rally at Port of Seattle Feb. 13 by Seattle Port Truckers Association against unsafe working conditions and police fines. "Safety issues affect all truck drivers," said trucker Calvin Borders.**

ticket for an overweight load a driver had brought to the meeting. "A driver is paid \$40 for a container. He has to pay a \$700 fine. The company says, 'That is your responsibility.' The State Patrol is out there every day hunting us like we are criminals. If it is a crime

they should go to the person who is giving the loads out."

"The struggle will continue," said a driver named Ben. We will make it better for other truckers. It is not just for American truckers. There are Mexican truckers here. The struggle is global."

## Steelworkers reinforce battle with Cooper Tire

**Continued from front page**

"Journey for Justice" caravan traveling from North Dakota to Ohio.

The caravan will end at a "Hands Around the Plant" rally outside the Cooper Tire and Rubber Co. factory here Feb. 27. Supporters of the Steelworkers' fight are encouraged to join in.

Some 1,050 members of United Steelworkers Local 207L were locked out Nov. 28 after rejecting Cooper Tire's contract demands to cut wages, speed up work, and establish lower pay and benefits for new hires.

The bosses' proposed wage scale includes increases to the base rates, but no details on what the new piece rates might be or how much faster workers may have to work to approach their previous income, or even just to keep their job. The company contract would estab-

lish—as yet also undisclosed—productivity standards that must be maintained to retain a particular job.

"In recent months, thousands of workers throughout North America have been locked out of their jobs," pointed out a Feb. 15 USW press release on the caravan. In addition to Cooper Tire and American Crystal, the union statement took note of lockouts by bosses at "Caterpillar, Rio Tinto Alcan, HealthBridge and elsewhere as employers try to drive wages and benefits down."

Plenty of fliers were available for the Journey for Justice at the local's successful food drive Sat., Feb. 11, held at the union hall in Findlay.

"I have never done anything like this, but we need to fight for our rights, we need to have a life that supports our families," Dave Burns, one of the four

locked-out Steelworkers going on the journey, told the *Militant*, as he helped out at the drive. North Dakota is in a worse position not getting unemployment benefits."

Workers locked out by American Crystal in North Dakota have been denied jobless compensation by the state government.

The Steelworkers continue to gain support from across the country. More than 40,000 pounds of food was delivered Feb. 11 during a drive organized by Women of Steel District 1. Members of USW locals throughout Ohio brought food and money donations.

The union hall was bustling with a human chain bringing in boxes of canned food, fresh fruit, frozen meat, bags of potatoes and more. As large bags of apples were being loaded onto tables a worker helping out said, "These guys don't know who they are messing with."

Teresa Brown, a member of Women of Steel District 1 and a locked-out worker, told everyone to take a break to hear an announcement from two USW Local 169 workers who were locked out at AK Steel in 1999-2003.

"Within eight hours \$2,270 was raised by passing the hat in our plant of 280 people," said Brian Speelman, president of Local 169. This was on top of the \$500 the union voted to contribute.

"As hard as the [AK Steel] lockout was," Speelman later said, "it was the most inspiring time in my life. Cooper Tire workers helped us along with many others."

Messages of support and donations can be sent to USW Local 207L, 1130 Summit St., Findlay, OH 45840. Phone: (419) 422-4224.

## Sugar workers kick off 'Journey for Justice'

**Continued from front page**

Olson, president of BCTGM Local 372G in Hillsboro, N.D. The caravan will begin in Fargo, N.D., Feb. 22, the same day as the sugar workers' rally in Moorhead. Locked-out sugar and tire workers will make stops along the way to speak at rallies and raise funds as they travel through North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana before concluding in Findlay Feb. 27 with a rally outside the Cooper Tire factory.

An AFL-CIO blog announcing the Journey for Justice caravan explains: "For workers making the Journey, the message is simple: They want to keep their union, and they want to go back to work."

American Crystal bosses have thus far stubbornly refused to back off from their union-busting demands. During the most recent negotiation session Jan. 30, the union offered concessions on health insurance and the use of outside contract workers. The company responded by saying the union's proposals didn't go far enough. "The Union's proposals represent a stubborn refusal to acknowledge the obvious—times have changed dramatically over the past fifty years and our contract needs to address

those changes," said a Jan. 30 company statement.

American Crystal bosses planned well ahead for their lockout, lining up hundreds of scabs from Strong Engineering to maintain production. Since November the company has been on a campaign to hire replacement workers from the local area.

"We see very few local scabs at the Drayton plant," Paul Woinarowicz, a locked-out worker with more than 30 years at American Crystal told the *Militant* in early February. According to Scott Ripplinger, a locked-out worker and co-chair of the union's Solidarity Committee, "the number of locally recruited scabs is around 20" at the East Grand Forks factory. Ross Perrin, chief union steward at the Moorhead plant, said, "The company has hired around 35 locals."

"Our February food drive is picking up steam," said sugar worker Ken Lamberson, while picketing near the south gate at the East Grand Forks plant. "We've gotten a couple of food drop-offs organized by Ralph Honda of the Letter Carriers union, who have helped us from the beginning."

"As well, we will be getting more than

500 pounds of beef from an anonymous donor—that's a lot of hamburger," Lamberson said.

"The union sent letters to farmers in the sugar beet districts asking for help in our food drive," said Ripplinger at the East Grand Forks picket line.

Over the past month, sugar workers have stepped up picketing. Each week they have put out a call for locked-out workers and their supporters to picket one factory during shift change. These "scab change" rallies, as the workers call them, have helped keep union morale strong.

Send messages of solidarity and contributions to BCTGM Local 167G, 100 N 3rd St. Suite 50, Grand Forks, ND 58203.

**Join/support the solidarity caravan**

**From Fargo to Findlay: A Journey for Justice**

Six states: Feb. 22 -Feb 27

Feb. 22 Rally at American Crystal HQ -Moorhead, Minn.

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## ON THE PICKET LINE

### Oil workers demand Tesoro withdraw medical, pension cuts

AVON, Calif.—Some 200 members of United Steelworkers Local 5 held a picket and rally Feb. 6 at the Tesoro Corp. refinery here demanding the company back off from medical and pension cuts, which have stalled contract negotiations. Job combinations are another sticking point.

The action was part of coordinated events because Tesoro bosses at their six refineries organized by the Steelworkers have not come to agreement with the union on “local” questions. Under “pattern bargaining,” wages and other “national” questions are negotiated industry-wide, but each union local has a separate contract and bargains on local issues.

Many picket signs stressed safety and contained the names of seven workers killed in an explosion at Tesoro’s Anacortes, Wash., plant in 2010. Refinery worker Suzette Tippitt told the *Militant* that four workers were killed here in 1999 when they were ordered to perform an operation they had objected to as unsafe. A federal investigation said “management failures” by prior owner Tosco, were the primary cause of the disaster. “We mourn for the dead, but fight for the living,” said Jeff Clark, secretary-treasurer of Local 5.

—Andrea Morell

### Philadelphia nurse aides protest job cuts at university hospital

PHILADELPHIA—Two hundred certified nurse aides and their supporters rallied outside Hahnemann University Hospital here Feb. 7, protesting what workers say is the planned elimination of 127 jobs.

The CNAs, members of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District 1199C, work for Tenet Healthcare Corporation, which contracts nurse aides, transportation, dietary and other jobs for the hospital.

The hospital administration told the press it plans to eliminate CNA positions over the next six months to a year and assign their tasks to registered nurses. The AFSCME contract expires July 1. Speaking at the rally, union President Henry Nichols called the moves against the CNAs “union busting.” Workers are maintaining informational pickets at hospital entrances.

—Osborne Hart

### NY Flushing hospital nurses approve new contract

FLUSHING, Queens, N.Y.—Nurses at Flushing Hospital here voted Feb. 9 to approve a new contract. The hospital administration had demanded deep

cuts in pensions and a steep increase in monthly health care premiums.

The 420 members of the New York State Nurses Association at the hospital had threatened to go on strike and held a spirited picket line Jan. 5 and a town meeting Feb. 2.

“The demands of the hospital are demeaning and insulting and it hurts,” Theresa Damico told the *Militant* at the town meeting. “If they get away with it here, they’re going to do this to other hospitals.”

The new contract includes a raise of 2 percent in the second and third years of the contract. Nurses will now pay up to \$100 a month for their health plan, half what the hospital administration was demanding.

At the voting site in the hospital boardroom, nurses had mixed views on the contract. “Our pensions and benefits remain intact,” said Tracey Kavanagh, who works in the operating room.

“I don’t think we won,” said Phyllis Jackson-O’Connor, a nursing case manager who voted against the proposed contract. “We should have gotten a raise the first year.”

—Candace Wagner

### Verizon workers protest strike-related firings

NEW YORK—Some 200 Verizon workers and their supporters rallied here Feb. 4 to protest lack of progress in contract talks and to demand rein-



Militant/Willie Cotton

**Oil workers picket Avon, Calif., refinery Feb. 6 rejecting Tesoro concession demands. Steelworkers union is negotiating local contracts at Tesoro refineries around the country.**

statement of 40 workers fired after a two-week strike in August. The rally was held outside a Verizon dispatch center where one of the fired unionists worked.

Some 45,000 members of the Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers from New England to Virginia went back to work under the terms of the previous contract after the company agreed to further negotiations.

“Negotiations are at a standstill,” Anel Vazquez told the *Militant*.

“We should’ve stayed out on strike until we had a contract,” said Brian Walsh. “Some people say, ‘that’s just

the way it is, live with it,’ I’m sorry, but that’s not the way it should be. Working people need to band together.”

—Seth Galinsky and Dan Fein

### Quebec day care workers hold one-day strike for contract

MONTREAL—Thousands of workers in public day care centers, Centres de la petite enfance, marched to the offices of Quebec Families Minister Yolande James Feb. 10 as part of a one-day strike to win a contract.

Buses from throughout Quebec brought workers from the day care centers, the big majority of them women. The action was organized by the Confederation of National Trade Unions. Some 8,500 workers in 360 centers have been without a contract for two years. Workers from more than 100 centers held a one-day strike Feb. 6; the Feb. 10 strike involved all 360.

The union is seeking an 11.25 percent wage increase over three years while the government is proposing 7 to 10 percent over five years. The average wage for the workers is \$19 per hour and the maximum after 10 years is \$21.65.

Day care worker Karine Doucet, who came on one of five buses from Saguenay, Quebec, said her husband is one of the workers locked-out by Rio Tinto Alcan since Jan. 1.

—Beverly Bernardo and Katy LeRougetel



Militant/Katy LeRougetel

**Thousands of day care workers march in Montreal, Feb. 10, part of second one-day strike in a week in face of refusal by Quebec government to meet union contract demands.**

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



**February 27, 1987**

NEW YORK—A judge’s verdict is now awaited in the manslaughter trial of Stephen Sullivan, the city cop who shot and killed Eleanor Bumpurs, a 66-year-old Black woman. Sullivan was one of a team of cops who broke into Bumpurs’ city housing apartment to evict her for owing four months on her \$98 rent.

The nonjury trial ended February 17 with prosecution and defense summations.

The defense argued Sullivan had slain the elderly woman to prevent her from attacking another cop with a kitchen knife. Sullivan’s first shot ripped off part of Bumpurs’ hand. He then fired the shot that killed her.

A doctor testifying for the defense asserted she might have been able to continue wielding the knife with her fourth and fifth fingers, after the remainder were shot off. He acknowledged he was paid \$750 for his testimony.



**February 26, 1962**

Under the influence of the Kennedy administration, the leadership of the United Steelworkers of America has failed to raise the demand for a “shorter work week at no reduction in pay” in the negotiations which opened Feb. 14 for a new contract in the basic steel industry.

For the first time in the history of the union, a federal administration has intervened directly in determining what the union’s contract demands should be.

The steel negotiations directly concern 430,000 union members in eleven major steel companies and will probably set a pattern for later negotiations covering 500,000 workers in metal fabricating, aluminum and other industries.

The union, and the labor movement generally, publicized the “shorter work week at no reduction in pay” as labor’s primary answer to unemployment caused by automation.



**February 27, 1937**

Demanding the 6-hour day and a \$6 wage, representatives of the United Mine Workers met soft-coal operators from eight States last week in a conference seeking a new agreement for the pact that expires March 31.

The miners are asking a guarantee of 200 working days a year with a basic yearly wage of \$1,200 and full right in determining working conditions and the use of machinery in speeding up production.

Prospects of securing the demands of the miners by peaceful negotiation seemed remote as mine operators rejected the proposals of the union as “utterly impossible” and countered with a plan to increase the weekly hours from the present 35 to 40. The owners professed amazement at the demand for a two-week vacation with pay, and declared that other proposals of the miners “were beyond the capacity of the industry.”

### Recommended reading



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# US economic war on Cuba

Continued from front page

the government that came to power organized workers and farmers to begin the transformation from the dog-eat-dog social relations under capitalism to those reflecting the solidarity and moral values of the toiling majority. Initial government measures implemented between the Jan. 1 triumph and mid-May included slashing rents, outlawing racial discrimination, and the expropriation of large landholdings and distribution of land titles to 100,000 landless peasants.

Steps taken by Cuba's toilers increasingly encroached on the property and prerogatives of both Cuban and U.S. capitalists. Cuba had been a virtual U.S. colony since the turn of the century and U.S. companies owned everything from sugar plantations to oil refineries, casinos, and telephone companies.

In June-July 1960 the U.S.-owned refineries refused to process oil purchased from the Soviet Union, and the workers took them over. In response, Eisenhower cut off agreements to buy Cuban sugar, the country's main export. Between August and October workers mobilized across the island to combat economic disruption by the capitalists, and the government responded by nationalizing virtually all large-scale Cuban-owned industry and all U.S. companies. In mid-October all banks, except Canadian-owned, were nationalized and landlords were barred from renting out urban real estate. Most Cubans became owners of their homes, and rent for others was limited to 10 percent of family income.

It soon became clear to all that the new proletarian leadership in power could not be bought off, that they fully intended to carry out the revolutionary program promulgated for years by Fidel Castro. Washington's hostility grew and manifested in an escalation of violent attacks, sabotage and economic warfare.

In October 1960 Eisenhower banned all U.S. exports to Cuba except for food and medicine. In April 1961 Cuban toilers crushed the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in less than 72 hours. Ten months later, Kennedy tightened the embargo.

The day after Kennedy's Feb. 3, 1962, announcement of the total embargo, a rally of 1 million Cubans adopted the Second Declaration of Havana, a revolutionary manifesto presented by then Prime Minister Fidel Castro. Washing-

ton's aggression is motivated by fear, the declaration stated. "Not fear of the Cuban Revolution, but fear of the Latin American revolution. ... Fear that the plundered people of the continent will seize the arms from their oppressors and, like Cuba, declare themselves free peoples of the Americas." It stated that the anti-imperialist struggle could not be led by the bourgeoisie of the colonial and semicolonial countries, that it would only be led to victory by the toiling majority, and declared that the duty of any revolutionist is to make a revolution—which Cuba proved was possible.

In the months that followed, the Kennedy administration took other measures designed to limit or make it more costly for other nations in Europe and Latin America to do business with Cuba.

## Cuban toilers block U.S. invasion

In October 1962 the Kennedy administration brought the world to the edge of nuclear conflict in what is commonly referred to as the Cuban Missile Crisis. The determination and readiness of the Cuban people and their revolutionary government blocked Washington's plans for a large-scale aerial bombardment and military invasion involving some 90,000 troops, and opened a way to resolve the crisis.

In an Oct. 23 speech broadcast to the entire population during the mobilization of millions of workers and farmers to again defend their revolution, Castro said, "We are serene in the knowledge that, if they attack us, the aggressor will be annihilated." In late October the Pentagon gave Kennedy the very conservative estimate of 18,500 casualties in the first 10 days of the planned invasion, a price the imperialists were in no political position to pay.

In July of the following year, Kennedy banned U.S. citizens from traveling to Cuba or engaging in any transactions with the country.

The economic and trade embargo has cost the Caribbean nation as much as \$975 billion over the last five decades, according to Cuban government estimates. Washington intensified the trade ban in the 1990s, as Cuba confronted a deep economic crisis triggered by the sudden collapse of trade on favorable terms with the Soviet Union.

The cynically named Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and Cuban Liberty

## Cuba's annual book fair opens in Havana



Militant/Maura DeLuca

HAVANA—Cuba's annual book fair opened to the public this weekend as tens of thousands flocked into the historic La Cabaña fortress to buy books. The opening ceremony, Feb. 9, heard remarks from Zuleica Romay, head of the Cuban Book Institute; and from Zoila Lapique, a national social science prize winner, and Ambrosio Fornet. This year's event is dedicated to the latter two.

A major focus of this year's fair is the cultures of the peoples of the Caribbean. There is a considerable presence of publishers and cultural figures from the region and a number of panels on aspects of the literature, culture and the class struggle in the Caribbean, "building bridges over the barriers of language and distance which have always separated people culturally so close" in the words of the daily book fair broadsheet.

In his remarks, Fornet, a national literature prize winner, spoke of the huge cultural expansion that followed the revolution's triumph—including the 1961 literacy campaign and the establishment of the national printing press—and to the challenges facing the revolution today. Speaking positively of measures being taken to increase production, he warned against the idea that "economic profitability" could become a guide to policies in the cultural sphere, and underscored the need to be on guard against the "lure of the market."

In addition to publishing books and putting on plays, concerts and ballet, he said, we must continually assess how we're doing in pushing back "machismo, homophobia, social indiscipline, racial prejudice, administrative corruption and the vicious burdens that came with the crisis of the 1990s," triggered by the collapse of trade with the Soviet Union.

—JONATHAN SILBERMAN AND MAURA DELUCA

and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996 made it illegal for foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies to trade with Cuba and closed U.S. ports to ships that had stopped in Cuba within six months.

One aspect of the embargo targets health care in Cuba, which nonetheless has a higher life expectancy and lower infant mortality rate than the U.S., according to World Bank indicators.

A study released by the American Association for World Health in 1997 noted, "From 1993 to 1996, Cuban companies spent an additional \$8.7 million on shipping medical imports from Asia, Europe, and South America." The same report described how access to medical products from Sweden and Germany were cut off after the suppliers were bought out by U.S.-based companies.

In 2006-2007, the threat of U.S. sanctions prevented the Japanese company Shimadzu from selling Cuba infrared spectrophotometers used in food inspection.

Last year the Barack Obama administration froze for several months \$4.2 million allocated to Cuba by a U.N. program aimed at combating AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

In part because of the extraterritorial character of the embargo, the U.N. General Assembly for 20 years straight has overwhelmingly adopted resolutions condemning U.S. sanctions against Cuba. Last year only the U.S. and Israeli governments voted against ending the embargo.

Some opponents of the embargo, including bourgeois critics, often describe it as a "failed policy" pressed by a layer of Cuban-Americans. But the drive to overturn the Cuban Revolution flows from the interests of the U.S. capitalist class as a whole. That's why the embargo, with tactical adjustments, has stayed in place with broad bipartisan support.

The Obama administration has eased some travel restrictions and remittances to Cuba, in part restoring measures that were in place under the Clinton administration. These are part of the policy the U.S. imperialist rulers call "Track II," carefully crafted to foster internal opposition they hope will undermine the revolution, to, as a White House statement put it, promote "independence from Cuban authorities" and "support private economic activity."

## Art exhibit at Seattle college wins support for Cuban Five



Pastel drawing by Antonio Guerrero.

BY EDWIN FRUIT

SEATTLE—For the past month, Seattle Central Community College has hosted an exhibit of drawings and paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and imprisoned by the U.S. government. The Cuban Five, as they are known, also include Gerardo Hernández, René González, Ramón Labañino and Fernando González. (See introduction to *The Cuban Five: Who they are, Why they were framed, Why they should be free* on page 7.)

Guerrero is serving 21 years and 10 months in prison followed by five years of supervised release. Exhibits of his art, as well as that of Gerardo

Continued on page 9



## Women in Cuba:

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# Cuban 5: Who they are and why they should be free

Updated booklet explains reasons and methods behind the US government's frame-up



Fernando González



Antonio Guerrero



Ramón Labañino



Gerardo Hernández



René González

*Below is the introduction to the most recently updated version of The Cuban Five: Who they are, Why they were framed, Why they should be free available from Pathfinder Press. Martín Koppel is the author of the first part of the booklet. Mary-Alice Waters is a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder. Copyright © 2012 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

*The Cuban Five: Who they are, Why they were framed, Why they should be free* is a selection from dozens of news articles and other features in the *Militant* newspaper over more than thirteen years on the frame-up trial and fight to free Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González. The five Cubans living in southern Florida were arrested and imprisoned by the US government in 1998, during the Clinton administration.

Framed on charges that included conspiracy to commit espionage and, in the case of Gerardo Hernández, conspiracy to commit murder, the five—who proudly acknowledged they were working for the Cuban government—were convicted in federal court in Miami and given draconian sentences. On September 12, 2011, they began their fourteenth year behind bars in US federal prisons.

What were their alleged criminal activities? Monitoring plans for action by counterrevolutionary Cuban American groups with a fifty-year record of deadly attacks on Cubans as well as other supporters of the Cuban Revolution—on the island, in the United States, and elsewhere. These organizations operate from US territory with Washington's complicity, as they've done ever since the victory of the revolution in January 1959.

Three of the Cuban Five, as they became known around the world, were given life sentences with no possibility of parole. Hernández received a double life term plus fifteen years. The US government has refused to allow Adriana Pérez and Olga Salanueva—the wives of Hernández and René González—to enter the United States to visit them. Olga and René have not seen each other in more than eleven years, Gerardo and Adriana in more than thirteen.

In August 2005 a three-judge panel of the US Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta ruled that the defen-

dants had been “unable to obtain a fair and impartial trial.” The judges pointed to “pervasive community prejudice,” “the government’s use of inflammatory statements during closing arguments,” and the “perfect storm” created by negative pretrial publicity. The court of appeals overturned the convictions and sentences of all five and ordered a new trial.

The US government demanded a review of that 2005 decision by the full appeals court. One year later the Eleventh Circuit, with two of twelve justices dissenting, reversed the ruling of the three-judge panel and upheld the convictions.

In June 2008, after further briefs and hearings, the appeals court ruled that the penalties handed three of the five exceeded federal sentencing guidelines. More than a year later, at the end of 2009, Labañino's life sentence was reduced to thirty years and that of Guerrero to twenty-one years and ten months. Fernando González's nineteen-year sentence was reduced slightly, to seventeen years and nine months.

In June 2009, in accord with the position argued by the Obama administration, the US Supreme Court declined, without comment, to review the case.

On October 7, 2011, René González, having served his prison term, was transferred to the jurisdiction of the federal probation office. Forced to remain in the United States and under US government custody for another three years of “supervised release,” he is fighting to be allowed to return to Cuba.

With all regular appeal procedures now closed to the defendants, the four who remain behind bars have each filed habeas corpus motions before the federal court in Miami, asking for a hearing to present new evidence that has come to light since they were convicted in 2001.

The fight waged by the five for their freedom, together with their unbending courage and dignity, have gained them broad and ever-growing support worldwide. Among those who have demanded freedom for the Five—and condemned the violations of constitutional rights in their arrests and trial, and the conditions under which they are held in US federal prisons—are numerous US and international legal associations, the Mexican Senate and other groups of parliamentarians across Europe and Latin America, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, trade unions, women's organizations, Cuban

Five solidarity organizations, and student groups.

Ten Nobel Prize winners and numerous prominent US artists and writers have added their voices to the campaign to free the Five, as has former US President James Carter. The Supreme Court appeal included an unprecedented twelve friend-of-the court briefs from legal scholars and associations around the world.

The *Militant* has written about and helped mobilize support for the fight to free the Cuban Five from the beginning. As the articles in this collection detail, the investigation, arrests, trial, conviction, and subsequent treatment behind bars of the Cuban Five involve multiple violations of the first ten amendments of the US Constitution, the Bill of Rights—won and defended in struggle by the toilers over more than two centuries. Every aspect of the frame-up is and remains an assault on the rights of all working people in the United States. And the conditions the Five have been subjected to are familiar to some two million others behind bars in the United States—and to their families.

At the same time, the Cuban Five are also the targets of Washington's determination to punish the people of Cuba for making and successfully defending their socialist revolution for more than half a century. As exemplary products and combatants of that revolution, the Cuban Five are being held hostage to the demands of the propertied rulers of the United States that the Cuban people renounce their sovereignty and independence and submit once again to the dictates—and oppression—of US capital.



The first part of this collection is a series of articles by Martín Koppel published in the *Militant* in 2008 and 2009, outlining basic facts about the case and the trial.

Part II contains articles on more recent developments: an article by Sam Manuel on the 2008 court decision vacating the sentences against Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and Ramón Labañino; an article by Seth Galinsky on the Supreme Court's 2009 refusal to review the case; and two news reports by Mary-Alice Waters and Ernest Mailhot on the 2009 resentencing hearings for the three. The latest articles, by Michel Poitras, report on the fight to permit René González to return to Cuba following

his release from prison, and on the habeas corpus petitions currently before US federal courts.

Articles have been edited to minimize repetition, as well as to update ages and years of imprisonment and make factual corrections.

The final part of the collection consists of three features published in the *Militant* giving readers a glimpse of the character and history of the Cuban Five—the kind of internationalist fighters they are. These include an interview with René González on his participation in Cuba's sixteen-year mission aiding the people of Angola to defeat repeated military interventions by the army of white supremacist South Africa; a tribute to Gerardo Hernández by a Cuban internationalist who served in the reconnaissance unit led by Hernández in Angola; and an article by Antonio Guerrero on how he taught himself to draw and paint in prison.

The selection will continue to be amended and expanded until the fight to win freedom for each and every one of the Five is won.

Martín Koppel  
Mary-Alice Waters  
JANUARY 2012

## New updated version



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# Women's oppression exists through history of class society

*Below is an excerpt from Problems of Women's Liberation by Evelyn Reed, a leading member of the Socialist Workers Party until her death in 1979. The book explores the economic and social roots of women's oppression from prehistoric society to modern capitalism. She explains why the oppression of women is a manifestation of specific property relations, not sex relations. In refuting the myth of women's inferiority, Reed points the road forward to women's emancipation. Copyright © 1969 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY EVELYN REED

One of the conspicuous features of capitalism, and of class society in general, is the inequality of the sexes. ... This inequality of the sexes has marked class society from its very inception several thousand years ago, and has persisted throughout its three main stages: chattel slavery, feudalism, and capitalism. For this reason class society is aptly characterized as male dominated. This domination has been upheld and perpetuated by the system of private property, the state, the church and the form of family that served men's interests.

On the basis of this historical situation, certain false claims regarding the social superiority of the male sex have been propagated. It is often set forth as an immutable axiom that men are so-



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

**More than 750,000 march in Washington, D.C., April 25, 2004, in defense of woman's right to abortion. Fight is key to battle for women's rights and to advance unity of working class.**

cially superior because they are *naturally* superior. Male supremacy, according to this myth, is not a social phenomenon at a particular stage of history, but a natural law. Men, it is claimed, are endowed by nature with superior physical and mental attributes.

An equivalent myth about women has been propagated to support this claim. It is set forth as an equally immutable axiom that women are *socially* inferior because they are *naturally* inferior to men. And what is the proof? They are the mothers! Nature, it is claimed, has condemned the female sex to an inferior status.

This is a falsification of natural and social history. It is not nature but class society which lowered women and elevated men. Men won their social supremacy in struggle against and conquest over the women. But this sexual struggle was part and parcel of a great social struggle—the overturn of primitive society and the institution of class society. Women's inferiority is the product of a social system which has produced and fostered innumerable other inequalities, inferiorities, discriminations, and degradations. But this social history has been concealed behind the myth that women are naturally inferior to men.

It is not nature but class society which robbed women of their right to participate in the higher functions of society and placed the primary emphasis upon their animal functions of

maternity. And this robbery was perpetrated through a twofold myth. On the one side, motherhood is represented as a biological affliction arising out of the maternal organs of women. Alongside this vulgar materialism, motherhood is represented as being something almost mystical. To console women for their status as second-class citizens, mothers are sanctified, endowed with halos and blessed with special “instincts,” feelings and knowledge forever beyond the comprehension of men. Sanctity and degradation are simply two sides of the same coin of the social robbery of women under class society.

But class society did not always exist; it is only a few thousand years old. Men were not always the superior sex, for they were not always the industrial, intellectual, and cultural leaders. Quite the contrary. In primitive society, where women were neither sanctified nor degraded, it was the women who were the social and cultural leaders.

Primitive society was organized as a matriarchy which, as indicated by its very name, was a system where women, not men, were the leaders and organizers. But the distinction between the two social systems goes beyond this reversal of the leadership role of the two sexes. The leadership of women in primitive society was not founded upon the dispossession of the men. On the contrary, primitive society knew no social inequalities, inferiorities, or discrimina-

tions of any kind. Primitive society was completely equalitarian. In fact, it was through the leadership of the women that the men were brought forward out of a more backward condition into a higher social and cultural role.

In this early society maternity, far from being an affliction or a badge of inferiority, was regarded as a great natural endowment. Motherhood invested women with power and prestige—and there were very good reasons for this.

Humanity arose out of the animal kingdom. Nature had endowed only one of the sexes—the female sex—with the organs and functions of maternity. This biological endowment provided the natural bridge to humanity, as Robert Briffault has amply demonstrated in his work *The Mothers*. It was the female of the species who had the care and responsibility of feeding, tending, and protecting the young.

However, as Marx and Engels have demonstrated, all societies both past and present are founded upon labor. Thus, it was not simply the capacity of women to give birth that played the decisive role, for all female animals also give birth. What was decisive for the human species was the fact that maternity led to labor—and it was in the fusion of maternity and labor that the first human social system was founded.

It was the mothers who first took the road of labor, and by the same token blazed the trail toward humanity. It was the mothers who became the chief producers; the workers and farmers; the leaders in scientific, intellectual and cultural life. And they became all this precisely because they were the mothers, and in the beginning maternity was fused with labor. ...

We do not draw the conclusion from this that women are thereby naturally the superior sex. Each sex arose out of natural evolution, and each played its specific and indispensable role. However, if we use the same yardstick for women of the past as is used for men today—social leadership—then we must say that women were the leaders in society long before men, and for a far longer stretch of time.

Our aim in this presentation is to destroy once and for all the myth perpetuated by class society that women are naturally or innately inferior.

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**PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia:** 3701 Pulaski Ave. Zip: 19140. Tel: (215) 225-1270. E-mail: philaswp@verizon.net

**TEXAS: Houston:** 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-50L. Zip: 77092. Tel: (713) 688-4919. E-mail: swp.houston@att.net

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:** 143 Kennedy St. NW, Suite 15. Zip: 20011. Tel: (202) 536-5080. E-mail: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

**WASHINGTON: Seattle:** 5418 Rainier Ave. South. Zip: 98118-2439. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: seattleswp@qwestoffice.net

### AUSTRALIA

**Sydney:** 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing

address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. E-mail: cl\_australia@optusnet.com.au

### CANADA

**QUEBEC: Montreal:** 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. E-mail: clc\_can@bellnet.ca

### FRANCE

**Paris:** P.O. 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 40-10-28-37. E-mail: milpath.paris@laposte.net

### NEW ZEALAND

**Auckland:** 4/125 Grafton Rd., Grafton. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140. Tel: (09) 369-1223. E-mail: clauack@xtra.co.nz

### UNITED KINGDOM

**ENGLAND: London:** First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green Road (Entrance in Brick Lane). Postal code: E2 6DG. Tel: (020) 7613-2466. E-mail: clondon@fastmail.fm  
**Manchester:** Room 301, 3rd floor, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. Postal code: M1 2EH. Tel: (016) 1478-2496. E-mail: clmanchr@gmail.com



# Stats mask US joblessness

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ger. The recovery is speeding up,” said Obama Feb. 3 in response to the government’s announcement that the unemployment rate declined to 8.3 percent in January from 8.5 percent the previous month.

These figures are “dangerously misleading,” noted Mohamed el-Erian in a *Washington Post* opinion piece the same day. “In fact, our current unemployment crisis is a force for broad and disruptive economic, political and social dislocations.”

The Labor Department simply does not count growing numbers of workers without jobs, shoving them into a “not in labor force” category. A record 1.2 million people dropped out of the labor force in January from the previous month.

One statistic that cannot easily be manipulated is the percentage of the total population that is working. What is called the labor force participation rate stood at 63.7 percent in January—its lowest level in 29 years. So while unemployment supposedly is on the decline, the percentage of the population that has a job is decreasing.

Among those considered not in the labor force for purposes of the government’s calculation of the unemployment rate are “discouraged” workers and those whom the government claims haven’t looked for a job over the past month, counted in the January figures

as being 2.8 million workers. Another 8.2 million unable to get full-time work have been forced into part-time hours. Young workers have suffered some of the biggest income declines and are having the greatest difficulty finding full-time work, according to a recent study by the PEW Research Center. The share of young adults 18-24 who are employed has dropped to 54.3 percent, the lowest level since 1948 when the government began keeping these figures.

For young people working full time, their weekly wages declined about 6 percent since 2007, as employers target wages and increasingly use two-tier wages to cut pay for new hires.

In the last quarter of 2011, 31 percent of those unemployed had been jobless for a year or more. Older workers were being hit the hardest with “more than 42 percent of unemployed workers older than 55 ... out of work for at least a year,” reported PEW.

Obama’s budget proposal submitted to Congress Feb. 13 includes a variety of tax credits and subsidies to domestic manufacturers, including plans to cut corporate tax rates, details of which will be announced later this month, reported CNNMoney. The president claims these moves will spur bosses to expand hiring—a supposition not supported by actual experience of past government efforts to “stimulate” economic growth, which more than anything led to capitalists’

## Caterpillar fight for severance pay continues



Militant/John Steele

LONDON, Ontario—Feb. 12 picket line at the Caterpillar-owned Electro-Motive Diesel plant here as 465 workers fight for an adequate severance package following Caterpillar’s Feb. 3 announcement that it was permanently closing the plant.

The workers were locked out Jan. 1 after rejecting the bosses’ demands for a 50 percent wage cut and steep cuts to their pensions and benefits. Canadian Auto Workers Local 27 has been negotiating with Caterpillar officials over a severance package. Workers say the picket line will stay up and nothing will be taken out until an agreement is reached.

—MICHEL DUGRÉ AND JOHN STEELE

hoarding of cash and highlighted their reluctance to invest today in the expansion of employment and productive capacity.

In a Feb. 10 *New York Times* article titled “Why Manufacturing Still Matters,” Laura Tyson, former economic adviser to President Bill Clinton in the 1990s, hailed Obama’s plan as promoting “strong labor productivity” and

“competitiveness of the United States,” code words for labor speedup and employers’ inroads against safety.

Pointing to the gains the U.S. rulers have already made along these lines, she wrote, “Between 2000 and 2011, American manufacturing employment declined by about 5.6 million while American manufacturing output ... expanded by about 1 percent.”

# Socialist Workers Party builds public meeting in New York

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that behind them stands their class rule through the capitalist state and ownership of the factories, mines, banks, and means of transport and trade. Solidarity and militancy, the essential starting point of all working-class struggle, cannot by themselves crack this dictatorship of capital.

The contradictions arising out of differing responses to this fact of the class struggle—not only among working people, but various middle-class currents that claim to speak for workers’ interests—pose alternative political courses.

Against this backdrop, the Socialist Workers Party has called a national public meeting March 10. The doors will open at 2 p.m. at the Armenian Ballroom, 630 Second Avenue (at 35th St.), in New York City. The program will be followed by discussion, dinner and a social.

Among the speakers will be Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party and Mary-Alice Waters, a member of the SWP National Committee and editor of *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*, newly published by Pathfinder Press.

Leading into the March 10 meeting, SWP members and young socialists have been joining with others in solidarity activities to strengthen workers resistance and seeking to expand the long-term readership of the *Militant*.

In the Midwest, the party is moving to launch the first of what will be dozens of 2012 SWP election campaigns that present an alternative of independent working-class political action. Campaign supporters explain the need to build a revolutionary working-class movement able to lead the fight for political power.

Other political forces in the workers movement and various middle-class currents counterpose one variant or another of liberalism and class collaboration that accepts capitalist rule. Over the past year, some have been attracted to the so-called Occupy movement, with its depiction of a world divided between “the 1 percent” of the rich and “the 99 percent” of all the rest. But the multi-millioned legions who serve, supervise, and apologize on behalf of the employing class—from the government bureaucracy, universities and think tanks, and non-governmental organizations, to cops, the army brass, and “officers of the courts” of every variety—play an integral role in maintaining the capitalist system.

The view of the “Occupiers” leads to political subordination to the class enemy, toward support for Obama in 2012 and the capitalist two-party system.

Today’s massive unemployment on which the functioning of the capitalist system depends, especially in times of crisis, falls hardest on workers who are African-American. The fact that Blacks remain an oppressed nationality—disproportionately proletarian relative to other layers of the population—reinforces this superexploitation.

The evidence? Look no farther than the enormous increase in the incarceration of workers, at an appalling multiple for those who are Black, and the “stop and frisk” and cop brutality tied to it.

That a much larger layer of Blacks than ever before in history are integrated into the rulers’ board rooms and political parties—including the White House today—doesn’t counter this reality of the working class in the United States.

Today’s capitalist crisis and toilers’

resistance in face of it are both global in reach. Working people and youth in Greece, Egypt, Syria, Iran, China, and elsewhere are seeking effective ways to resist tyranny and fight the exploiters’ economic attacks.

And the lessons of workers’ struggles, too, are global. Leading up to and since the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, its leadership has advanced the involvement of working people in every aspect of taking their destiny into their own hands. They set an example for workers in the U.S. That example is central to the new Pathfinder book *The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*—which Mary-Alice Waters participated in launching at the Havana International Book Fair just weeks before the New York meeting at which she will speak.

On Sunday morning, March 11 a meeting will be organized for people

interested in the communist movement and who want to discuss Saturday’s talks further.

Also on Sunday organized supporters of the SWP will discuss their work in the Print Project, keeping Pathfinder Press titles in print. They will discuss expanding the Supporters Monthly Appeal, which raises financial contributions for party work.

From March 12-14 the SWP National Committee will meet on plans for the party convention, set for June. The leadership meeting will prepare to kick off the SWP 2012 presidential campaign and an ambitious *Militant* subscription drive.

For more information on the weekend’s activities, contact the New York Socialist Workers Party, which is hosting the meeting, or local distributors of the *Militant* in your area, listed on page 8.

## Cuban 5 art exhibit in Seattle

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Hernández, serving two life sentences plus 15 years, have helped introduce thousands of people to the international campaign to free the five revolutionaries.

More than 100 attended the grand opening of the exhibit here Jan. 12. Ken Matsudaira, the curator of the gallery, estimated that 400 to 500 people have seen the exhibit so far. “Several teachers brought their classes,” he told the *Militant*. Students looked at the art, read the material, and viewed the video on life in Cuba today. “Students asked about the 50-year U.S. economic embargo and wanted to know when the four remaining political prisoners would be released,” said Matsudaira.

René González was let out of prison Oct. 7, but has been prevented from returning to Cuba during a three-year supervised release imposed as part of his sentence.

The Human and Civil Rights Committee of the American Federation of Teachers Local 1789, which represents the community college faculty in Seattle, co-sponsored the exhibit along with the gallery.

Matsudaira said Guerrero’s exhibit would be displayed through Feb. 17. Afterward, one of Guerrero’s pastel drawings, “One day my prison shirt will be left hanging,” will be sent to London as part of a Cuban art show. The rest of the exhibit will be sent to another location still to be determined.